

TRINITY AND QUATERNITY

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ONE OF Jung's major discoveries is the psychological significance of the number four as it relates to the symbolism of psychic wholeness and the four functions. The significance of the quaternity is basic to his whole theory of the psyche, as regards both its structure and its developmental goal. Analysts are thus particularly alert to quaternity symbolism as it appears in the dreams of their patients and in the imagery of myth and folklore. However, there are other numerical motifs which we commonly encounter. Perhaps the most frequent of these is the theme of three. Because of the predominant value that Jung attached to the quaternity, he tended, in most cases, to interpret trinitarian images as incomplete or amputated quaternities (cf. Jung, 1944, *C.W.* 12, p. 26, and 1951, *C.W.* 9, ii, p. 224). This approach calls forth certain objections. Victor White, for instance, writes (1960, p. 106): "... are we *always* compelled to ask, when confronted with the number three, 'Where is the fourth?' Are we to suppose that always and everywhere the number three is to be understood only as four minus one?—that every triangle is only a failed square? ... Or could it possibly be that ternary symbols are, so to speak, archetypal images in their own right, which present a content distinct from that of the quaternity?" The present paper is a preliminary inquiry concerning his question.

I shall begin by considering what Jung has said on the subject. His most comprehensive discussion of trinitarian symbolism is in his essay "A psychological approach to the dogma of the Trinity" (1948, *C.W.* 11). The essay begins with a review of pre-Christian trinitarian images. It then describes, in considerable detail, the numerological symbolism of Plato and the Pythagoreans. Following some psychological commentary on the Christian trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Jung then summarizes the historical development of the dogma of the trinity as part of the creed. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the psychology of the three aspects of the trinity, and a comparison with the image of the quaternity. The latter is considered as bringing the trinity to completion by the addition of the fourth previously rejected element, namely, matter, the devil, and the dark side.

Reading this essay carefully, I think it will be agreed that there is a certain confusion in the psychological interpretation of the trinity symbol. Without

specifically stating it, Jung seems to be interweaving two different interpretations which are at variance with one another. He seems to be interpreting the trinity as an incomplete representation of the deity, perhaps necessary for a certain period of psychic development, but, because it leaves out of account the fourth principle of matter and the evil side of God, inadequate for the needs of individuation. After discussing the reality of the evil power, Jung writes (1948, *C.W.* 11, p. 169 f.):

"In a monotheistic religion everything that goes against God can only be traced back to God himself. This thought is objectionable, to say the least of it, and has therefore to be circumvented. That is the deeper reason why a highly influential personage like the devil cannot be accommodated properly in a trinitarian cosmos. . . . [If he were] that would lead straight back to certain Gnostic views according to which the devil, as Satanaël, is God's first son, Christ being the second. A further logical inference would be the abolition of the Trinity formula and its replacement by a quaternity."

However, in other places in the essay, Jung speaks of the trinity symbol as referring to three stages of a developmental process which is complete and sufficient in itself, without the need for the addition of a fourth. For instance, he describes the three stages of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as follows.

About the world of the Father:

"The world of the Father typifies an age which is characterized by a pristine oneness with the whole of Nature" (*ibid.*, p. 134) . . . an age "far removed from critical judgement and moral conflict" (*ibid.*, p. 133). "It is . . . man in his childhood state" (*ibid.*, p. 134).

About the world of the Son:

"A world filled with longing for redemption and for that state of perfection in which man was still one with the Father. Longingly he looked back to the world of the Father, but it was lost forever, because an irreversible increase in man's consciousness had taken place in the meantime and made it independent" (*ibid.*, p. 135). "The stage of the 'Son' is . . . a conflict situation *par excellence* . . . 'Freedom from the law' brings a sharpening of opposites" (*ibid.*, p. 182).

Concerning the world of the Holy Ghost:

"The advance to the third stage [the Holy Ghost] means something like a recognition of the unconscious, if not actual subordination to it. . . . Just as the transition from the first stage to the second demands the sacrifice of childish dependence, so, at the transition to the third stage, an exclusive independence has to be relinquished" (*ibid.*, p. 183). "[The] third stage . . . means articulating one's ego-consciousness with a supraordinate totality,

of which one cannot say that it is 'I', but which is best visualized as a more comprehensive being" (*ibid.*, p. 185).

In these quotations that describe the three developmental phases of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there is no suggestion that the trinity is an incomplete symbol requiring the addition of a fourth element. Rather, the trinity seems to symbolize adequately and completely a developmental process in time. In discussing this developmental process Jung says: "The rhythm is built up in three steps, but the resultant symbol is a quaternity" (*ibid.*, p. 175). This statement clearly implies that the threefold rhythm and the fourfold goal are separate symbolic entities, neither of which can properly be interpreted in terms of the other. However, this point is later lost when the trinity is described as an incomplete representation of the deity.

I would suggest that we need to pay greater attention to this image of the threefold rhythm of the developmental process. Let us consider that this ternary symbol is a separate and valid entity within itself. In this case, the archetype of the trinity or threefoldness and the archetype of quaternity or fourfoldness would refer to two different aspects or dimensions of the psyche, each valid, appropriate, and complete in its own realm. I would suggest that the quaternity image expresses the totality of the psyche in its structural, static, or eternal sense, whereas the trinity image expresses the totality of psychological experience in its dynamic, developmental, temporal aspect.

Quaternity mandala images emerge in times of psychic turmoil and convey a sense of stability and rest. The image of the fourfold nature of the psyche provides stabilizing orientation. It gives a glimpse of a static eternity. The mandalas of Tibetan Buddhism, as we know, are used for that very purpose. They are instruments of meditation which convey to consciousness a sense of peace and calm as though one were safely grounded in the eternal structural substance and protected from the disrupting dangers of change. Borderline patients in analysis sometimes discover this method of meditating on their own mandala paintings for themselves when their psychic integrity is endangered.

Trinitarian symbols on the other hand imply growth, development, and movement in time. Thus writes Baynes (1949, p. 565): "The triune archetype symbolizes the dynamic or vital element." And again (*ibid.*, p. 495): "The number 3 is specifically associated with the creative process . . . Every function of energy in nature has, indeed, the form of a pair of opposites, united by a third factor, their product. Thus the triangle is the symbol of a pair of opposites joined above or below by a third factor." Jung gives the trinity a dynamic, developmental interpretation in his description of the three phases of psychological development as the stages of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Do not all events in time naturally fall into a threefold pattern? Every event has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The conscious mind thinks of time in the three categories past, present, and future.

Joachim of Floris, 1,000 years ago, interpreted the trinity in terms of periods of time. According to his view, before Christ was the age of the Father, the first millennium after Christ was the age of the Son, and the second millennium was to be the age of the Holy Spirit.

When dealing with temporal or developmental events there seems to be a deep-seated archetypal tendency to organize such events in terms of a threefold pattern. Freud submitted to this pattern when he described psychological development in terms of the three stages: oral, anal, and genital. Esther Harding (1963, pp. 23 f.) made use of this same threefold pattern when she described the three stages of psychological development under the names *autos*, *ego*, and *self*. Another example of a threefold division in the developmental process is furnished by Alfred North Whitehead (1949). In his essay "The rhythm of education" he distinguishes three stages in the natural learning process. He calls these the stage of romance, the stage of precision, and the stage of generalization. The first phase, the stage of romance, is characterized by the emotional excitement of first discovery: there is a total response which does not merit the coolness and discipline of a systematic approach. Rather the child, or man for that matter, is intoxicated by the glimpse of a new world opening. The second phase, the stage of precision, subordinates breadth and totality of approach to exact formulation. Here we have precise accumulation of facts, and critical, intellectual analysis. The third phase, the stage of generalization, is called by Whitehead the synthesis of the two previous approaches. It is a return to the total response of the romantic stage, with the added advantage of classified ideas and relevant technique.

In his essay (1948, *C.W.* **11**, pp. 148 ff.) Jung describes Pythagorean number symbolism, which is pertinent here. The number one as the first and original number is, strictly speaking, not a number at all. One as unity and totality exists prior to the awareness of numbers, which requires a capacity to distinguish between separate, discrete entities. Thus, one corresponds symbolically to the *ouroboric state* prior to creation and the separation of things. Two is, then, the first real number, since with it is born the possibility of discriminating one thing from another. Two symbolizes the act of creation, the emergence of the *ego* from the original state of unity. Two implies opposition. Two is the separation of one thing from another and thus represents a state of conflict. Three, however, is the sum of one and two and unites them both within itself. It is the reconciling symbol, which resolves the conflict state of two. To three would apply Jung's comment about the symbolic significance of the Holy Spirit, when he says: "The Holy Ghost is a *complexio oppositorum* [union of opposites]" (1948, *C.W.* **11**, p. 186).

Approaching the trinity from this angle there is no room for a fourth element. If we think of it as reflecting a dynamic, developmental process, the third term is the conclusion of the process. The third stage has restored the original unity of the one on a higher level. This new unity can be disturbed

only by the emergence of a new opposition which will repeat the trinitarian cycle.

There is an exact parallel to this number symbolism in the formula Hegel proposed for understanding the historical process. All the movements and happenings in human history fall into a threefold cyclic pattern. First, an original position is conceived and established, called the thesis. Next, the opposite position, the antithesis, is constellated, grows, and finally overthrows the first. In the final phase the onesidedness and inadequacy of the antithesis are recognized and replaced by a synthesis of the two opposites. The formula is thus: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. The synthesis can then become a new thesis through which the cycle is repeated. In my opinion, this was an insight of the first magnitude, and once grasped it is supremely simple and self-evidently true. So far as I know, Hegel put this forward only as a historical law, not as psychological one. However, I think it is much easier to verify in individual psychology than in history. It is one more expression of the archetype of the trinity which gives structure and meaning to the dynamic, temporal events of human life in contrast to the static, eternal aspect.

There is an inveterate tendency for mankind to conceive of the deity as threefold in nature. The Christian trinity is only one example of this. In his essay Jung describes Babylonian and Egyptian trinities. In addition, there are the Greek trinities: Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, and the various embodiments of the triple mother goddess. Destiny, the force directing one's temporal fate, has generally been conceived under a threefold image. For example, in Greece there were the three Fates: Clotho who spins the thread of life, Lachesis who measures it, and Atropos who cuts it. In Teutonic myth there were the three Norns: Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld. Urd, the aged one, refers to the past, Verdandi to the present, and Skuld to the future. Hermes was most frequently considered as a trinity. Numerous shrines were set up in his honour at the junctions of three roads until they became so commonplace that they provided the origin of the word "trivia". This list of examples, which could be considerably expanded, indicates a widespread tendency to attribute to the deity a threefold nature. How are we to understand this in the light of our conviction that the psyche has a fourfold structure? I would suggest that these trinitarian images may refer to functional or process deities as opposed to deities representing structures. In other words, they would be personifications of the psychic dynamism in all its phases. From this standpoint, a trinity could express totality as well as a quaternity, but it would be totality of a different kind. In the one case it would be a totality of the various dynamic phases of a developmental movement; in the other case a totality of structural elements. Three would symbolize a process, four a goal.

Adler (1961) makes a distinction between feminine triads and masculine triads. He states (p. 260n.): "The feminine triad is . . . always connected with instinctual events in their natural development and growth, whereas the masculine three is based on the dynamic opposition between thesis and

antithesis finding its reconciliation in the third step of the synthesis." This is undoubtedly true. The feminine trinities seem to derive from the categories of the natural, biological—one could almost say non-psychic—growth process, such as birth, maturation, and death, whereas the masculine trinities seem to relate specifically to the development of the psyche or consciousness. In the latter case, we have not biological categories but rather spiritual or psychic ones, such as thesis and antithesis, or God and Satan. However, despite this distinct difference, in the broad sense both masculine and feminine trinities refer to a dynamic, developmental process in time.

In a paper entitled "The ego-self paradox" (1960), I attempted to outline a scheme of psychological development to explain the relations between ego and self which we observe at the various levels of conscious development. I likewise made use of a threefold pattern—the three entities being the ego, the self (or non-ego), and the connecting link between them (ego-self axis). According to this hypothesis, development of consciousness occurs via a threefold cycle which repeats itself again and again throughout the lifetime of the individual. The three phases of this repetitive cycle are (i) ego identified with self; (ii) ego alienated from self; and (iii) ego reunited with self through the ego-self axis. In briefer terms these stages could be called: (i) the stage of the self; (ii) the stage of the ego; and (iii) the stage of the ego-self axis. These three stages correspond precisely to the three terms of the Christian trinity: the age of the Father (self), the age of the Son (ego), and the age of the Holy Ghost (ego-self axis). This is another example of a threefold pattern expressing the totality of a temporal, developmental process.

The theme of transformation, of death and rebirth, which is a dynamic, developmental happening, is also associated with the number three. Three days is the symbolical duration of the night sea journey, e.g. Christ, Jonah (Jung, 1952, *C.W.* 5, p. 331). Christ was crucified between two thieves. It was thus a triple crucifixion. Similarly, Mithra was commonly represented between two dadophori or torchbearers, one with torch raised, the other with torch lowered (Cumont, 1956). The theme of "the way", in which a third middle course emerges out of the dialectic of opposites, is another expression of triadic symbolism. In this connection, one thinks of the saying of Lao-tzu: "The one engenders the two, the two engenders the three, and the three engenders all things" (*Tao Te Ching*, 42).

The relation between the image of the way and ternary symbolism is illustrated in a very interesting case study published by Adler (1961). After about three months of analysis, a patient had the following dream: "I heard a voice saying very clearly: 'In three days' time'" (*ibid.*, p. 140). Three days after this dream the patient had an intensely moving fantasy which she described as follows:

"I can see my own unconscious not as something alien but as something made of the same stuff of which I am also made; so that there is a road, an

unbroken connection between me and all other creatures and it. I can feel how this goes to the root of my neurotic problem: I had had a direct perception of something unrelated to and impossible to relate to the rest of my experience; the world therefore did not make sense, and it was therefore almost literally impossible to live. Now the world makes sense again" (ibid., p. 144).

Five days after this fantasy she had another visual image of

"three interesting circles (seen as three-dimensional) with vertical and horizontal poles passing through the points of intersection" (ibid., p. 155).

These three images, all coming within a period of eight days, demonstrate a clear connection between the number three and the theme of the road or the way. As Adler observes, the phrase "in three days' time" refers to the night sea journey. This was verified by subsequent developments. The vision of the three circles again emphasizes the number three. The description of the road fantasy is most interesting. Here the patient is becoming aware of a connecting link between herself, the ego, and the non-ego. I would understand the road, which brings a sense of union and reconciliation, as a representation of the ego-self axis. This discovery is reached through a threefold process involving the three terms, ego, non-ego, and the connecting link between them; hence the emphasis on the number three.

In fairy tales we find a wealth of ternary symbols. Important actions leading to transformation or achievement of the goal must often be repeated three times. In many cases the story makes it clear that action number one is based on one side of a pair of opposites, action number two is based on the other side of the pair of opposites, and action number three is a synthesis or reconciliation of the two opposites. To give a single example, in Grimm's fairy tale "The water of life" a princess is waiting to marry the man who will come straight down a golden pavement to her gate. Three brothers try to reach her. The first, not wanting to damage the pavement, rides to the left of it and is refused admittance. The second, also not wanting to damage the pavement, rides to the right of it and is denied entrance. The third, pre-occupied with reaching the princess, does not even see the golden pavement and rides straight down the road. He is the one admitted and allowed to marry the princess.

These examples all go to show that in a certain aspect of psychic life, totality is symbolically expressed by three and not by four. This aspect is the developmental, temporal process of realization. Although the goal is fourfold, the process of realizing it is threefold. Thus the three and the four would represent two separate aspects of life. Four is structural wholeness, completion—something static and eternal. Three, on the other hand, represents the totality of the cycle of growth and dynamic change, conflict and resolution and renewed conflict again. Then, in accordance with the trinitarian

formula, the thesis three and the antithesis four must be resolved in a new synthesis.

Over and over again in his writings, Jung returns to the alchemical question: "Three are here, but where is the fourth?" This wavering between three and four is well explained by the theory of the four functions and the striving for wholeness. However, could not the antagonism between the three and the four have another meaning also? Could it not refer to the proper and necessary conflicts in man between the completeness of the static, eternal quaternity and the dynamic change and vitality of the trinity? Quaternity and mandala symbolism, including the temenos and magic circle, distinctly emphasize the theme of containment. Add to this the fact that even numbers are traditionally considered feminine while odd numbers are thought of as male. This suggests that the quaternity may be predominantly an expression of the mother archetype or feminine principle, with emphasis on static support and containment; whereas the trinity is a manifestation of the father archetype or masculine principle which emphasizes movement, activity, initiative. If this view is valid, we would then need another image of totality to unite the opposites three and four.

If the trinity can carry a significance equal to but different from the significance of the quaternity, it should emerge in empirical psychological material with about the same frequency and emphasis as does the quaternity. I have a suspicion that it does, although we may miss it because of our preoccupation with the quaternity. For instance, I turned to a collection of mandalas published by Jung (1950) and was surprised to find how frequently there was trinitarian imagery embedded in pictures which had been selected to demonstrate the quaternity. A mandala reproduced by Jung entitled "The Tibetan world wheel" (*C.W.* 9, i, fig. 3) is interesting in this respect. It is said to represent the world. The wheel is held by the god of death, Yama, and is based on a trinitarian pattern. At the centre are three animals, cock, snake, and pig. There are six spokes on the wheel and twelve outer divisions. Jung says about this mandala:

"The incomplete state of existence is, remarkably enough, expressed by a triadic system, and the complete (spiritual) state by a tetradic system. The relation between the incomplete and the complete state therefore corresponds to the . . . proportion of 3 : 4" (*ibid.*, p. 360).

I would add to this that a complete state is also static, eternal, other-worldly. It would correspond to the image of a god who does not participate in the conflict and flux of history, one who does not undergo development.

When we begin to examine unconscious material with the trinity in mind, we discover that ternary symbols are not uncommon. For instance, a man who had been in analysis for many years had the following dream: A circular object was being divided into triangular sectors, much as one would cut a pie into pieces. The two geometrical forms, circle and triangle, seemed

to stand out in the dream and impress themselves on the dreamer. The dream carried a sense of impact and importance. To the circle was associated Jung's conception of the mandala, wholeness, something to be desired. To the triangle the patient associated the trinitarian image of God. If we are to understand this dream at all, we must resort to some conceptual generalizations such as I am trying to present. In the dream, a circle is being dismembered into triangles, following which the image of a circle is contrasted with the image of a triangle. The dream contrasts the complete, circular state with the threefold triangular state. I take this to mean that an attitude emphasizing static completeness must be complemented by the trinitarian dynamic principle. The threefold temporal process breaks up the static, eternal state and subjects it to a development of events in time, involving recurrent conflicts and resolutions according to the formula thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

Another patient had this dream: She is a student in a classroom. She feels confident about her lesson, and when asked to recite the assignment begins to give the multiplication table for four: four times one, four times two, etc. The teacher interrupts, saying that this is not the assignment. The assignment is to multiply *three*-place numbers by four. Her confidence gone, the dreamer realizes she is not yet able to multiply three-place numbers in her head, and sits down in confusion. Her association to four was the quaternity of psychic wholeness, the mandala. About three-place numbers she said that they tripled the difficulty of multiplying, and also that three reminded her of the Christian trinity. This dream seems to speak directly to our subject. Simple, one-dimensional fourness is not the assignment. Rather, fourness is to be met in a threefold setting, making it much more complex and difficult. Fourness or psychic totality must be actualized by submitting it to the threefold process of realization in time. One must submit oneself to the painful dialectic of the developmental process. The quaternity must be complemented by the trinity.

Another example is taken from Adler's case study previously mentioned. There he cites a dream which occurred several years before the beginning of analysis and is considered to have initiated the individuation process. It carried a powerful impact and was recorded as follows:

[I saw] "on an oval patch of blackness, which shaded off vaguely, a rod made of yellowish-white metal; at one end of it was a monogram of the figures, 1, 2, 4 [superimposed on one another]" (1961, p. 26).

This was the whole dream. What made its significance certain was the dreamer's associations to the monogram of numbers. The rod reminded her of a key or magic wand, and she associated it with the *labarum* carried before Roman emperors. She was reminded especially of Constantine's dream on the eve of battle, in which he saw the sign of Christ in the sky and heard a voice say, *In hoc signo vinces*. Concerning the dream, Adler writes: "So far as the sequence '1, 2, 4' is concerned, it represents the development of the

mandala symbol, and of psychic totality. The number 1 represents an original, undivided, preconscious totality; 2 is the division of this preconscious totality into two polarities, producing two opposites. . . . And the further subdivision—corresponding to the synthesis arising out of thesis and antithesis—would produce the four parts of the circle, and with its center, signifying the mandala. . . . The sequence of the three numbers 1, 2, 4 would thus represent the natural growth, the ‘formula’ of the mandala” (ibid., p. 29). Adler then quotes Jung as saying: “The unspeakable conflict posited by duality . . . resolves itself in a fourth principle, which restores the unity of the first in its full development. The rhythm is built up in three steps, but the resultant symbol is a quaternity.” Later, Adler confuses this interpretation by finding it necessary to account for what he calls “the striking omission of the number 3”. He interprets the omission of the masculine 3 as representing a compensation for the patient’s identification with the patriarchal world. In my opinion this second interpretation is dubious and, if true, would invalidate the first. The number three is already in the sequence 1, 2, 4 if it is taken as a totality, since it is a threefold sequence. Considering it to be a geometrical series rather than an arithmetical one, the three is quite properly missing. If I understand the symbolism correctly, to substitute the sequence 1, 2, 3, 4 for the dream sequence 1, 2, 4 would destroy the essence of the symbolic meaning, which I understand to be the combination of a threefold process with a fourfold goal.

Jung provides us with another example of the fusion of quaternary and ternary images. I refer to the mandala vision published in *Psychology and alchemy* (1944, C.W. 12, p. 194):

[The dreamer sees] “a vertical and a horizontal circle, having a common centre. This is the world clock. It is supported by the black bird. The vertical circle is a blue disc with a white border divided into thirty-two partitions. A pointer rotates upon it. The horizontal circle consists of four colours. On it stand four little men with pendulums, and round about it is laid a [golden] ring. . . . The clock has three rhythms or pulses:

1. The small pulse: the [vertical] pointer advances by $1/32$.
2. The middle pulse: one complete revolution of the [vertical] pointer. At the same time the horizontal circle advances by $1/32$.
3. The great pulse: 32 middle pulses are equal to one revolution of the golden ring.”

This vision is a beautiful mandala image with marked emphasis on the quaternity, e.g. four colours, four little men. However, it has a threefold pulse or rhythm. When I looked up Jung’s commentary on this vision, I discovered the following. Jung emphasizes the quaternity aspect of the image, and about the three rhythms he says only: “I do not know what the three rhythms allude to. But I do not doubt for a moment that the allusion

is amply justified. . . . We shall hardly be mistaken if we assume that our mandala aspires to the most complete union of opposites that is possible, including that of the masculine trinity and the feminine quaternity . . ." (ibid., p. 196).

In his commentary on the same vision in *Psychology and religion* (1940) Jung has this to say about the threefold rhythm: "If we hark back to the old Pythagorean idea that the soul is a square, then the mandala would express the Deity through its threefold rhythm and the soul through its static quaternity, the circle divided into four colours. And thus its innermost meaning would simply be the *union of the soul with God*" (C.W. 11, p. 72). And later he says: ". . . the quaternity is the *sine qua non* of divine birth and, consequently, of the inner life of the Trinity. Thus circle and quaternity on one side and the threefold rhythm on the other interpenetrate so that each is contained in the other" (ibid., p. 73). It is clear from these quotations that Jung himself does not consider the quaternity a completely adequate symbol for totality. Rather, a union of the quaternity with the trinity in a still higher synthesis is required.

If when confronted with three it is proper to ask where is four, perhaps it is equally proper, when confronted with four, to ask where is three. Because of our preoccupation with the quaternity as the *summum bonum* we may see only the four in imagery that actually combines both four and three. The theme of twelve, for instance, includes both three and four as its factors. Likewise, the number seven may have its particular significance because it combines four and three by being their sum. I would suggest that we be more alert for and more respectful of trinitarian symbolism, and I would also propose that mandalas that unite both threefoldness and fourfoldness are probably more indicative of real development than those that have a simple fourfold structure. I suspect that the fourfold ones serve more of a stabilizing, protective function for an ego that is in danger of disintegration, whereas the mandalas that unite three and four represent a genuine insight into ultimate reality.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wegen der vorherrschenden Bedeutung, die Jung der Zahl vier beilegte, hatte er in den meisten Fällen die Neigung, trinitäre Vorstellungen als unvollständige Quaternität zu interpretieren. Die vorstehende Arbeit unterbreitet die These, dass Dreiecks- und Dreieinigkeits-Symbole als solche wohlbegründet und vollständig sein können und keine Notwendigkeit besteht, sie nur als unvollkommene Quaternitäten anzusehen. Jungs Studie zur Psychologie des Trinitätsdogmas wird besprochen und es wird aufgezeigt, dass in dieser Arbeit zwei verschiedene Interpretationen des Dreiecks-Symbolismus miteinander verflochten sind. Einerseits wird die Trinität als unvollständige Darstellung der Gottheit erklärt, weil sie das vierte Prinzip der Materie und des Bösen unberücksichtigt lässt. Andererseits spricht Jung aber auch von dem Trinitätssymbol in Bezug auf drei Stadien eines Entwicklungsprozesses, der in sich vollständig ist und keinen Raum für ein viertes lässt.

Trinitäts-Symbolismus weist oft auf den dreifachen Rhythmus des Entwicklungsprozesses hin, durch welchen sich die Psyche in Raum und Zeit verwirklicht. Quaternitäts-Vorstellungen bringen die Totalität der Psyche in ihrer organischen, statischen und ewigen Bedeutung zum Ausdruck, während Trinitäts-Vorstellungen die Totalität psychologischer Erfahrung in ihrem dynamischen, ihrem Entwicklungs- und zeitlichen Aspekt ausdrücken. Es scheint eine tief verwurzelte Neigung zu bestehen, historische und zeitliche Ereignisse in dreifacher Gliederung darzustellen. Beispiele für diese Tendenz werden gegeben, einschliesslich Hegels Formel für den Verlauf der Geschichte: These, Antithese, Synthese.

Die Zahl drei wird mit dem Thema einen Mittelweg zwischen den Gegensätzen zu finden und mit der nächtlichen Seefahrt assoziiert. Daher hat sie Bezug auf den Wandlungsprozess, der sich als zeitliches Entwicklungsereignis abspielt. In Märchen müssen die entscheidenden Handlungen dreimal wiederholt werden, womit ihre symbolische Verknüpfung mit dem Vorgang einer Verwirklichung angedeutet ist. Untersucht man unbewusstes Material mit der Trinität im Sinn, so kann man bisher übersehene Dreiecksbilder entdecken. Viele Beispiele der Mandala-Darstellungen, die Jung veröffentlichte, weisen Dreiecks-Symbolik auf. Beispiele von Dreifaltigkeits-Vorstellungen aus der klinischen Praxis und aus der Literatur werden vorgelegt.

Die vierfache psychische Totalität wird zur Tatsächlichkeit, indem sie einem dreifachen Verwirklichungsprozess in der Zeit unterworfen wird. Man muss sich selbst der schmerzlichen Dialektik des Entwicklungsprozesses unterwerfen, insofern als der Kreislauf von

Wachstum und dynamischem Wechsel Konflikt, Lösung und wiederum erneuten Konflikt mit sich bringt. Das Ziel ist die Vier, aber der Prozess ihrer Verwirklichung ist n dreifacher. Fragen wir uns, wenn wir uns der Drei gegenüber sehen, wo die Vier ist, so ist es vielleicht genau so angebracht, wenn wir uns der Vier gegenüber sehen, nach der Drei zu fragen. Wegen unserer Befangenheit in der Quaternität kann es passieren, dass wir die Bedeutung der Trinität vernachlässigen. Beispielsweise mögen die Zahlen sieben und zwölf ihre eigentümliche Bedeutung haben, weil sie Kombinationen von drei und vier sind. Mandala-Vorstellungen, die Dreifaltigkeit mit Vierfaltigkeit vereinigen, sind wahrscheinlich ein besseres Anzeichen wirklicher Entwicklung als solche, die eine klare vierfache Struktur haben. Letztere erfüllen mehr eine stabilisierende, schützende Funktion für ein Ich, das sich in Gefahr der Auflösung befindet, während Mandala-Bilder, die die drei und die vier vereinen, echte Einsicht in letzte Wirklichkeit darzustellen scheinen.